

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 19 with the following paragraph:

As may be seen particularly in the exploded view of Figure 6, the puck assembly 30 further includes a c-shaped puck plate 40. The puck plate 40 is affixed to the puck element 30 on the outer edge 42, by way of screws 44 or other conventional manner and preferably includes a circumferential surface 46 in rotational contact with a plurality of circumferentially spaced roller bearings 48 located in a puck mount plate 50. The puck ~~[[mount]]~~ plate ~~[[50]]~~ 40, when affixed to the puck element 32 on its outer edge 42 and in conjunction with the axially extending marginal support shelf 38, provides a circumferential trough 54.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 19 with the following paragraph:

The puck assembly 30 further includes an upper puck guide member 68 having a radially inwardly extending curb surface 70, a plurality of ~~through apertures 58~~ countersunk apertures 56 to receive roller bearings 48, and a plurality of apertures with countersunk areas ~~[[56]]~~ 57 for receiving mounting bolts or screws 44 which are in turn received by ~~corresponding through apertures 58 in~~ the puck mount plate 50. The radially inwardly extending curb surface 70 is preferably received in the aforementioned circumferential trough 54.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 28 with the following paragraph:

The puck assembly 30 further includes a lower puck guide member 72. The lower puck guide member 72, similarly to the upper puck guide member 68, includes an arcuate, coaxial, radially extending curb surface 70, a plurality of apertures ~~[[58]]~~ with countersunk areas 57 for receiving mounting bolts or screws 44, and a plurality of countersunk apertures ~~with countersunk areas 56~~ for receiving additional roller bearings 48. The arcuate, coaxial radially extending curb 70 of the lower puck guide 72 is preferably arranged to be received in the circumferential trough 54 formed by the puck plate 40 and support shelf 38 of puck member 32 (see particularly Figure 8).

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 4 with the following paragraph:

As seen in Figures 6 and 7, the puck mount plate 50 includes at least one aperture 58A for receiving a drive sprocket 74, ~~and further includes an idler pulley 76.~~ An idler pulley 76 is preferably provided and rotatably coupled to the puck mount plate 50. The drive sprocket 74 and the idler pulley 76 being spaced and arranged to support a preferably notched drive belt 78. The notched surface 78A of the drive belt 78 is adapted to engage the toothed marginal edge 36 of the puck member 32. The relationship of the components will be hereinafter discussed.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 26 with the following paragraph:

As seen particularly in the exploded view of Figure 6, the puck member 32 is further provided with a pair of complementary, pivotally mounted, wing members 90A, 90B. Each wing member 90A, 90B preferably has a general configuration defining two oppositely disposed arm members 92A, 92B and defining an obtuse angle 94 therebetween. Arm members 92A each include an end 96, which is pivotally mounted at its extremity to the puck member 32 by means of respective pivot pins 89. Arm members 92B each preferably include an opposite end 98 extending inwardly of the cavity 84 and having an obverse side 100 in contact with a complementary side 102 of the second one of the pair of wing members 90A, 90B. Each of the wing members 90A, 90B is preferably normally biased toward one another by means of a respective spring loaded pin 104 bearing on the respective pivoted arm 92A, the bias of which directs the wings 90A, 90B towards one another. In this way, when an elongate object 5 is introduced past the door 82 and into the cavity 84 of the puck member 32, the inward pressure of the ~~peripheral~~ outer surface 145 of the elongate object 5 causes the ~~pivoted arms 92A, 92B~~ wings 90A, 90B to separate relative to one another and thereby allow the elongate object 5 to be held between the normally contacting wing arms [[92A,]] 92B. While the elongate object 5 is held in this position, the rotational movement of the puck element 32 causes the label 26 to be secured around the elongate object 5. While the drawings show pivoted wing members 90A, 90B including pivot pins 89, and spring loaded pin 104, it is to be understood that the present invention may be practiced using wing members 90A, 90B having an inherent bias toward one another and being rigidly suspended from the puck member 32 (not shown).

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 24 with the following paragraph:

Prior to placement into the apparatus 10, the labels 26 may be conjoined by way of a releasable liner material 27 (as seen particularly in Figure 10). When the labels 26 are conjoined in this way, they may be spooled on a label roller assembly 24 (see Figure 1) for facile dispensation into the apparatus 10. As seen in Figure 2, the spooled labels 26 may be manually threaded through the apparatus 10 prior to commencement of labeling process. The labels 26 and releasable liner material 27 are positioned in the apparatus 10 such that they are guided by rollers 106 past ~~an infrared sensor~~ a sensor assembly 108, a tensioner arm 110, and a label stripping assembly 112 (all of which will be hereinafter discussed). Thereafter, the liner material 27, having been stripped of the labels 26 by label stripping assembly 112, continues past rollers 106 and into a nip 114. The nip 114 is preferably provided by a drive roller 116 and a cooperating idler roller 118. The idler roller 118 is mounted at the distal end 119 of a pivoted lever arm 120 that is pivotally supported intermediate its ends 119, 119A and which the free end 119A is supported by an adjustable, spring biased tensioner 122. The drive roller 116 is designed to pull the backing material 27 through the apparatus 10 and after labels 26 have been removed, onto a take-up roll 28, as mentioned earlier.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 4 with the following paragraph:

As earlier mentioned, the labels 26 and backing material 27 are pulled through the apparatus 10 and past [[a]] the sensor assembly 108. The backing material 27 is preferably overprinted with a band of transparent UV ink, in order to define datum marks 124 (see particularly Figure 10). The sensor assembly 108, such as an infrared sensor, is arranged to detect the datum marks 124 between successive labels 26, so that the apparatus 10 can determine label 26 presence and spacing as well as incremental movement of the labels through the apparatus 10, and alternatively, determine where to form prints on successive labels 26, if supplied with a printer (not shown) for on demand label printing. In order to achieve this, the sensor assembly 108 comprises a light source (not shown), which illuminates the backing material 27 with UV light. UV light is reflected from the backing material 27 onto a UV sensor (not shown) disposed adjacent the light source. The output of the sensor is connected to a control unit via a level detector. In use, a greater amount of UV light is reflected by the backing material 27 when the datum marks 124 pass the sensor. The level detector is arranged to detect the increased output level of the sensor and in this manner an assembly control

circuit can control the position of successive labels 26 to correspond with the position of the successive marks 124 as the backing material 27 and attached labels 26 advance through the apparatus 10.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 22 with the following paragraph:

The apparatus 10 further preferably includes a gripper assembly 136 for alternatively grasping and positioning an elongate article 5 to be labeled. The gripper assembly 136 is preferably independently operated by a gripper motor 16, as mentioned earlier. As shown in Figure 4, the gripper motor 16 drives an eccentric rotor 138, which is pivotally attached to one end 139A of a linkage 140. The opposite end 139B of the linkage 140 provides rotative motion to gripper elements 142, thereby allowing grasping and ungrasping of an object, such as the elongate article 5 shown in these views. As seen, the gripper elements 142 each preferably include a pair of spaced apart, openable jaw members 144. As may be seen particularly in Figures 11 - 20, inclusive, the jaw members ~~[[114]]~~ 144 are adapted to receive, grasp, and position an elongate object 5 relative the puck member 32. While the gripper elements 142 are shown as being spaced apart a predetermined distance to one another it is to be understood that the predetermined distance may be varied according to need, or alternatively may be adapted to put longitudinal tension on a grasped elongate object 5, thereby holding the object 5 taut for the labeling process.